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Examiners' Report  
June 2011

GCE Italian 6IN04 01

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## Introduction

This paper is made up of three sections.

Section A is the translation: candidates are required to translate a text of approximately 80 words from English into Italian. This text is no longer linked to a reading comprehension task as in the previous syllabus. 10 marks are awarded for this section. For the marking of this section the text is divided into 30 assessable items and points are awarded for each item that is 100% correct in terms of grammar and spelling. Therefore candidates will be rewarded for their accurate handling of grammar and structures and their lexical knowledge.

Section B is Creative or Discursive Essay: candidates are required to write one piece of 240-270 words in Italian choosing from three creative titles and four discursive essays. They will be rewarded for their ability to organise arguments and ideas and to make relevant points in response to a general issue. They will be rewarded for their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and for the ability to organise their ideas. Almost three quarters of the available marks (30 out of 45) are awarded for content (up to 15 for Understanding and response and up to 15 for Organisation and development) whilst up to 15 are awarded for language (up to 10 for Range and application of language, i.e. lexis and structures, and up to 5 for Accuracy).

Section C is the Research Based Essay: candidates are required to write one piece of 240-270 words on a topic that relates to one of the four main areas of research (Geographical area, Historical study, Aspects of modern society, Literature and the arts). Their chosen topic must also relate to Italian culture and society, essays referring to non-Italian topics will score no marks. Candidates will be rewarded for their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and their ability to organise ideas. Up to 30 marks are awarded for Reading, research and understanding (i.e. their knowledge but more importantly their analysis and evaluation of the chosen topic), up to 9 for organisation and development and up to 6 for Quality of language.

## Question 1

The translation appeared to be less demanding compared to last year, both in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Candidates generally handled many of the elements well.

For marking purposes the text is divided into 30 assessable chunks and a point is awarded for each chunk that is 100% correct in terms of grammar and spelling.

Therefore many items were accessible to the vast majority of candidates, for example "in Italia", "la famiglia e'", "molto importante", "il padre era", "guadagnava i soldi", "la situazione". Many candidates demonstrated knowledge of these key items of vocabulary and were successful in correctly rendering them although there was a disappointing number of candidates who misspelt "guadagnava" (frequently adding an "r" in the middle: "guardagnava") or failed to employ the imperfect tense when required ("era/guadagnava/prendeva"; it was not prescriptive in "it had" as both "ha avuto/aveva" were acceptable).

Many also struggled with agreements (article agreement or adjectival agreement), especially with "tutte le decisioni".

Many candidates had difficulties with phrases such as "Southern European", "with the passing of time" and "within the family" (although the simpler "nella famiglia" was also accepted in the mark scheme).

"Il capo della famiglia" was at times not known and was incorrectly rendered as "la testa della famiglia".

The second half of the translation gave candidates a chance to display their knowledge of more advanced grammar structures such as the subjunctive: they could use "sebbene + subjunctive" to render "although" (but "anche se + indicative" was also accepted) and again they could use the subjunctive in "abbia causato" although the indicative was also accepted here.

Overall there were problems with misspelling ("istituzione" being the most common, but at times also "famiglia" was misspelt as "familia"), omission of accents (in "liberta'", "opportunita'" and in some cases even "e'") and omission of apostrophes ("un'istituzione", "un'influenza"), misuse of prepositions (especially in *preposizioni articolate* "dell'/ nell'importanza della famiglia" together with the incorrect use of "di" following "piu'", i.e. "piu' di liberta'") and a general lack of accuracy, suggesting that many candidates did not check their work sufficiently.

A surprising number of candidates wrote the anglicised "faceva" instead of "prendeva tutte le decisioni".

This candidate got 18 correct chunks, scoring a total of 6 marks.

In Italia, come in molti paesi europei del sud, la famiglia è un'istituzione sociale molto importante. Nel passato, avuto un'influenza enorme sulla vita quotidiana. Il padre era il capo della famiglia: lui ha guadagnato i soldi e ha preso tutte le decisioni. Comunque, con il passaggio del tempo, la situazione nella famiglia è cambiata. Nonostante le donne oggi hanno più libertà e opportune opportunità, alcune persone credono che questo abbia causato un esito nell'importanza della famiglia.



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#### Examiner Comments

This candidate lost one point by spelling "istituzione" incorrectly (with an "n"). Other points were lost for using the wrong form of the verb in "ha avuto", for missing an apostrophe in "un'influenza" and for misspelling "quotidiana". The lexical item "guadagnare" was not known despite being a fairly basic word. The ending in "tutte le decisioni" was wrong. "il passaggio del tempo" was not an acceptable rendition of "with the passing of time". "Nonostante" was not followed by the subjunctive and "donne" was used without the definite article. "Persone" was unfortunately spelt as "personne". On the other hand this candidate dealt well with some more demanding verbs such as "è cambiata" and with the subjunctive in the last sentence and the vocabulary is sound.



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#### Examiner Tip

This candidate would have scored almost full marks if more attention had been paid to detail.

## **Question 2 (a)**

This was the most popular of the three creative titles. Candidates were required to write an account of what occurred to attract Luca's attention all of sudden and what ensued as a result. The response should also include a conclusion to the situation and it should be developed and well structured. As the stimulus was in the present tense candidates could continue it with the presente storico if they chose to do so, however most continued it in the past tense, some even using passato remoto. Whichever tense they used, verbs were generally very solid and many candidates were able to use descriptive language to develop their account.

There were many good responses to this question. Many candidates wrote that the light was an alien starship, or a falling star. Some were very inventive, narrating a love story or some climate disaster. Some candidates did however deviate and lose their way and a few did not really offer a satisfactory explanation of the light in the story, thereby producing an account that did not flow well as a continuation of the stimulus material.

## **Question 2 (b)**

The headline was about a rebellion in class against a teacher. Candidates were required to mention what the teacher was forced to accept. Any logical or creative development could follow on from an initial 'setting the scene' of the story.

Those who chose the journalistic option clearly were able to write in this style, there were hardly any incorrect formats. Again this produced creative answer such as many students were rioting because of changes to rules or because of incapable teachers.

However some interpreted it incorrectly as a discursive title and produced essays centred about problems within the educational system, such as the recent rise in university fees in the UK, which was an unsuitable approach to the title.

## **Question 2 (c)**

This was an invitation for the candidate to write about a situation which has occurred on the street during some riots. Candidate were asked to explain exactly what happened, what they did in the circumstances and how it ended up.

Most candidates understood the requirements of the question and included all the required elements.

Most of the accounts dealt with riots in town, football riots, fights with hostile immigrants, demonstrations that got out of hand. Some demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the current political situation in Italy and wrote about demonstrations against Berlusconi.

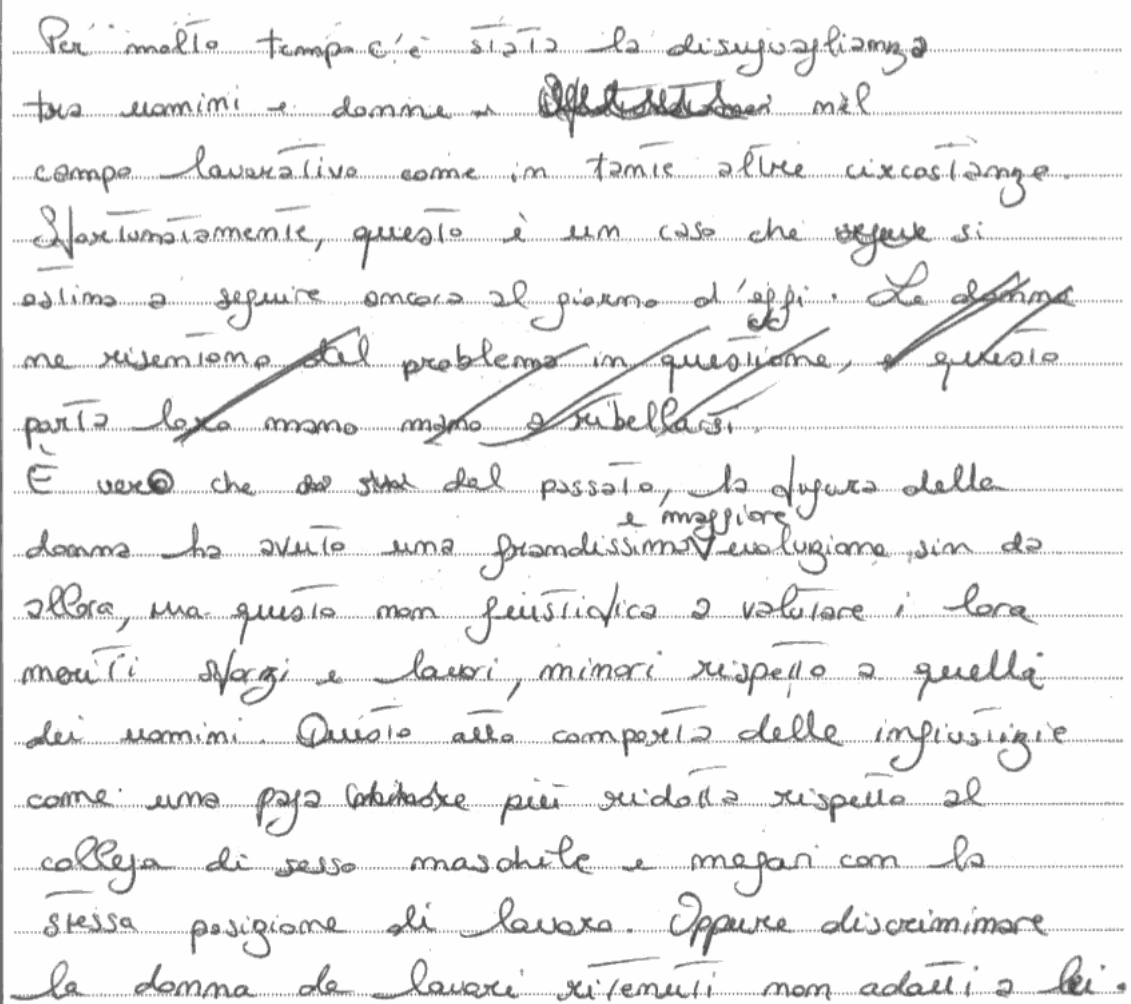
A few candidates did not develop their account to a logical conclusion and creative development suffered as a result. Some responses to this question were little beyond GCSE level in terms of language used.

## Question 2 (d)

This was by far the most popular of the discursive essays and it provoked some strong responses. Candidates were required to present a balanced argument discussing the key points for and against on the topic of women's pay. They could take a strong viewpoint but conclusions had to be fully justified and clearly expressed. Wider discussions referring to other aspects of equality or lack of between men and women were also acceptable.

The vast majority of candidates understood the requirements of the question and addressed these in their essay. Many discussed problems faced by women in the workplace, the demands of family life and the injustice of unequal pay despite apparent equal opportunities and levels of education. Better candidates developed their point in relation to the title while some of the less able candidates deviated and produced repetitive responses making the same point several times. A few of the less able candidates produced an overly personal response to the question which did not read like a discursive essay and as a result did not reach a logical conclusion in response to the question set. Practically all candidates felt that it is not just for women to earn less than men for the same job. Most took the view that women should receive the same pay as men unless the work involved hard physical labour, allowing for women's weaker physique. A few mentioned that women should stay at home and not be wanting roles not suited to them but these were rare.

This is a reasonably good response to the question set.



Per molto tempo è stata la disuguaglianza tra uomini e donne ~~affettuosi~~ nel campo lavorativo come in tante altre circostanze. Fortunatamente, questo è un caso che segue si stima a seguire ormai il giorno d'oggi. Le donne ne ritengono il problema in questione, e questo porta loro mano mano a ribellarsi. È vero che da anni del passato, la figura della donna ha avuto una grandissima <sup>e maggiore</sup> valutazione, sin da allora, ma questo non giustifica a valutare i loro meriti sforzi e lavori, minori rispetto a quelli dei uomini. Questo alto comporta delle ingiustizie come: una paga inferiore più ridotta rispetto al collega di sesso maschile e magari con la stessa posizione di lavoro. Oppure discriminare la donna da lavori ritenuti non adatti a lei.

Inoltre, sono loro stesse a decidere della loro  
vita cosa farne delle loro vite e sapere solo  
loro possono sapere cosa sia meglio per loro senza  
~~che lo decidano gli altri~~ e se hanno le abilità per farlo

Piano piano del problema in questione, le  
donne iniziano a risentirne tanto da partire  
a ribellarsi. Episodi simili sono già avvenuti  
in gran parte <sup>delle diverse</sup> ~~delle~~ <sup>voci</sup> ~~regioni~~ ~~Per evitare peggioramenti,~~  
~~sarebbe meglio prendere dei provvedimenti e~~  
~~cercare di soddisfare le loro giuste richieste~~  
~~ovvero di essere considerate allo stesso livello~~  
~~dei uomini.~~ Inoltre, è da non dimenticare che  
sono state innumerevoli, le donne a dimostrare  
di ~~essere capaci~~ possedere le stesse capacità di  
un uomo in diverse e varie occasioni  
di ~~fronte~~ <sup>svariati</sup> ~~diversi~~ <sup>eventi</sup> come  
nello sport, nella politica o nel lavoro. Personalmente,  
non ~~ritengo~~ ~~costo~~ ~~affatto~~ questa considerazione  
che si ha sulle donne come tutte le donne  
d'altronde \* ~~Per evitare peggioramenti,~~ <sup>ovunque</sup> ~~Per evitare~~  
~~peggioramenti;~~ <sup>cercando</sup> ~~sarebbe~~ ~~meglio~~ ~~procedere~~ ~~lanciare~~ ~~avanti~~  
~~e cercare~~ di soddisfare le loro giuste richieste  
ovvero, di essere valutato ~~similmente~~ allo stesso  
livello del uomo.

\* e soprattutto che non siamo pagate con lo stesso  
prezzo in cui loro si sacrificano e si  
impegnano nel lavoro che svolgono con ~~passione~~  
megari passione.





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**Examiner Comments**

Accuracy: 4/4. There are a few errors, especially with articles (for ex. "i uomini")  
Range and application of language: 8/10 There is some good topic specific vocabulary and some more complex structures (\*gerund, subjunctive, use of pronouns) used generally correctly.  
Understanding and response: 10/15, The question is understood and some relevant points are made but it is slightly repetitive.  
Organisation and development: 9/15 Development is not always clear, ideas are not always well sequenced.



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**Examiner Tip**

This candidate is clearly able to manipulate language but would have benefited from a plan to help them sequence their ideas more effectively.

## **Question 2 (e)**

Candidates had to present a balanced argument considering all the key points for and against the study of literature.

This question produced very many good quality answers. Candidates generally presented many good reasons about why it is still worthwhile reading and studying literature. Answers included that literature provides enjoyment for the reader, that it is a good way of broadening horizons, of helping to learn another language and that it is good for (inter) cultural understanding.

Most of them took the view that the study of literature allowed for understanding of the culture and times, ultimately leading to a more rounded and tolerant individual.

Many candidates mentioned the changing nature of the modern world with the reliance on technology and the economic climate which may lead to a lessened interest in literature but most felt that the benefits of reading and studying literature mean it is still worthwhile nowadays.

## **Question 2 (f)**

Candidates will have to consider whether they feel threatened by terrorism and why/why not.

This question produced answers that frequently referred to the 9/11 attacks or the July bombings in London. Although many said they were aware of the risks of terrorism, especially in large cities or using the underground, they did not feel unduly threatened reasoning that the fear of an attack was a victory for the terrorist.

A few candidates addressed the question adequately. Some candidates deviated into a general discussion of religion and these responses did not fully address the question.

## **Question 2 (g)**

Candidates were asked to consider whether it is true that sport involves too many financial and commercial interests (sponsors/betting/adverts etc).

This question provided a mixture of responses in terms of quality. More able candidates mentioned different financial and commercial interests in sport such as sponsorship, corruption, wages and major sporting events. Many candidates felt that the true meaning of sport has been overshadowed by these interests.

A large number of candidates focused (at times too heavily) on football and the Olympic Games. Some only referred to one sport (generally football) rather than sport in general. Many of these essays contained contemporary references to badly behaved footballers in the news recently: often these candidates wrote mainly about footballers' excessive pays, which was only one aspect of "interessi finanziari".

A few candidates seemed to misunderstand what was meant by *interessi* however and produced incoherent responses.

More able candidates wrote their response about sport in general.

### **Question 3 (a)**

Candidates were required to describe the demographic features of their chosen region/town and explain their importance. By region it is generally meant one of the 20 Italian regions, but there were essays about other geographical areas such as the Alps, Pianura Padana and the dolomites, which were accepted nonetheless.

This question unfortunately produced many unsatisfactory responses. A lot of candidates did not seem to understand what was meant by *caratteristiche demografiche* (despite it being in the syllabus) and produced answers that were largely irrelevant. Many seemed to produce pre-learned responses about the region or city without addressing the question set.

Some candidates mentioned the population of the region/city in general terms but this was most often not developed well.

Better answers referred to the influx of tourists and immigrants to the area or to the city and the inevitable benefits or drawbacks.

### **Question 3 (b)**

Candidates were asked to consider which historical character of the period they have studied has most contributed to the history of his/her times.

The most popular historical periods were *Risorgimento* and *fascismo* and therefore the most popular historical figures were Mussolini, Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour. The majority of candidates showed at least adequate, and in some cases, very good knowledge about the contribution the individual made. Their justification of the choice proved more problematic and many candidates struggled to explain why the individual's contribution was so important. Weaker answers were merely narrative and lacked the evaluative dimension.

A few possibly misunderstood *personaggio* and answered with reference to a book or film (Literature and the arts) instead of answering question 3d. Candidates need to be trained that there is only one question set for each topic and it is the one that has to be answered.

### **Question 3 (c)**

Candidates had to consider which change in modern Italian society has been the most significant and why.

Candidates tended to mention changes to society as a result of immigration but again they struggled to explain the importance of this in any significant way and many of these responses ended up being more like a generic essay rather than a research based essay. A few responses were on the mafia and while a couple of the candidates tried to explain the changes to the public's attitude as a response to the murders of Falcone and Borsellini, there were a couple of responses which were merely a history of the mafia and these were totally irrelevant as there was no attempt at all to situate the response within the context of the question set.

Other significant changes in society were environmental / technological but again these were often too general and did not show much research. Some better responses instead made reference to Berlusconi and how he has ruined Italian society.

### Question 3 (d)

Candidates were required to consider the impact of the society in their chosen text, play or film.

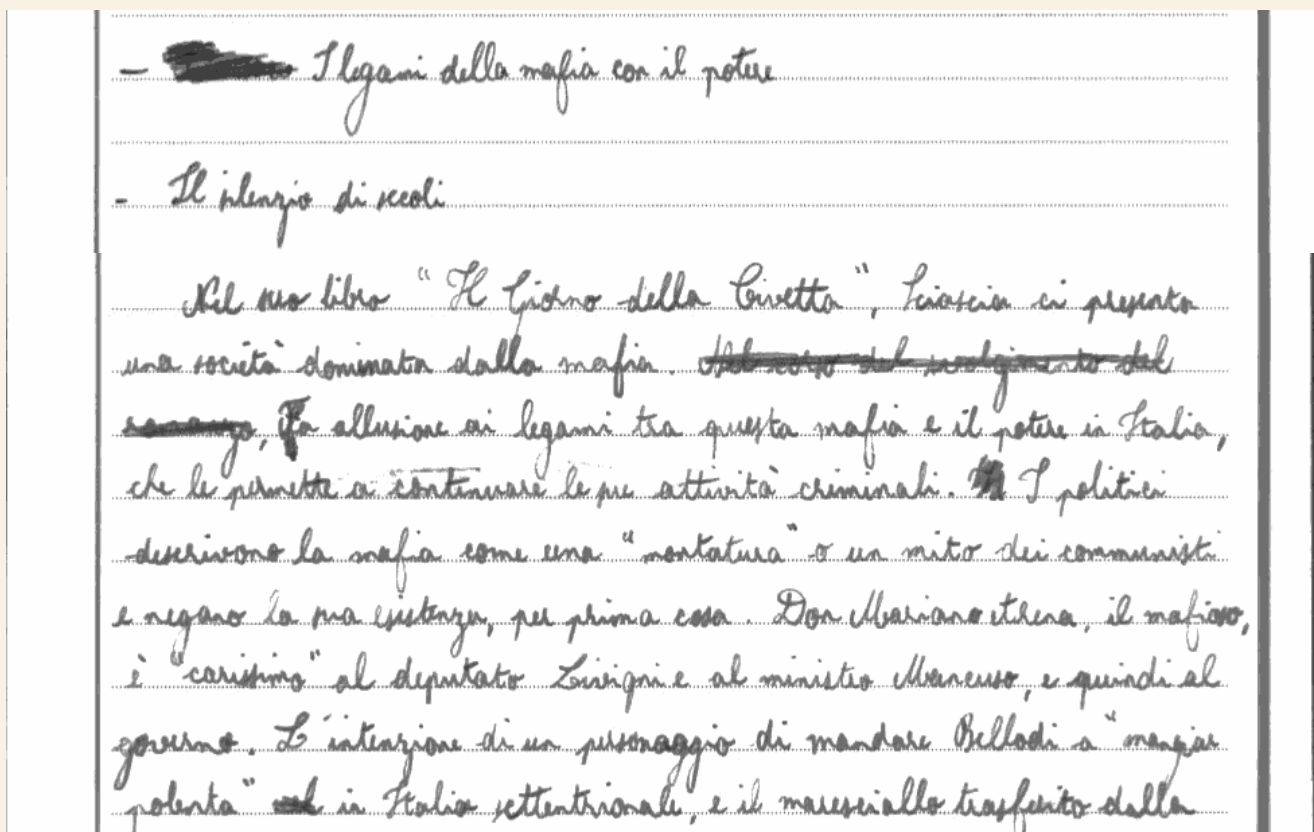
This was the most popular question in section 3 by far and the vast majority of candidates answered on *Io non ho paura*. Many candidates mentioned aspects such as the poverty in the society, *gli anni di piombo* and the differences between north and south and how the nature of the circumstances related to this deprivation causes the characters to act in the manner they do. All too often, however, candidates deviated into a discussion of the characters themselves, often losing sight of the question.

Another popular choice was *La vita è bella*. Here candidates mentioned the racial discrimination and the difference between social classes. Unfortunately candidates often deviated from the question and discussion tended to be overly focused on the plot. There were a few good responses on *Volevo i pantaloni* and candidates mentioned elements of society such as its traditional nature, the difference in treatment between males and females and the importance of honour.

Some had studied more unusual and demanding texts such as Dante, Pirandello (*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*), *I promessi sposi* but were generally able to write analytical and interesting essays.

There was at times some misunderstanding of "società", which was obviously meant to be the social, cultural and - wherever applicable - historical background of the story narrated in the text (as indicated in the specifications, which list the social and cultural setting as one of the aspects to be studied).

This is a very good response to the exam question about the importance of society in the text. the candidate's chosen text is *Il giorno della civetta* by Leonardo Sciascia.



Sicilia al "continente" alla fine del libro ci mostra il potere politico della mafia. Ha legami con grate "fedelissimi" dappertutto; e il prete che dice che Don Mariano sia un "galantuomo" ci fa sospettare che ne ha proprio con la Chiesa.

Infine, Livia ci mostra la paura della società siciliana. Roma è "dorata"; ma le scene in Sicilia si vedono nel buio. Questo sembra rappresentare l'ignoranza che risulta dalla paura. La morte, come nel caso di Parrinella, è il destino delle persone che fanno "infamia" e parlano alla polizia; e Marchica e Lizzuro negano l'esistenza di mandati per gli omicidi. Il "silenzio di morte" regna, poiché nessuno abbia voglia di essere <sup>come</sup> la "civetta", quando di giorno compare e denunciare la mafia da sola. La società nel romanzo è quindi importantissima, e la sua descrizione è il scopo del libro. Livia dipinge una società dove i criminali hanno legami con il potere, e dove gli abitanti hanno troppo paura per sfidarli; e critica fortemente

quindi l'Italia dei suoi tempi.



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### Examiner Comments

Reading, research and understanding: 21/30. The candidate demonstrates a good understanding of the chosen text and has clearly carried out some in-depth research. Most points are substantiated.

Organisation and development: 7/9 Ideas are generally effectively sequenced.

Quality of language: 5/6 language is accurate and appropriate, almost fluent, with very few errors.



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### Examiner Tip

This candidate has clearly studied in depth their chosen text and has a good understanding of the question set. There is a very good analytical description of the society in Sicily but the second part of the question (the importance of society) could have been developed further.

## Paper Summary

This year this unit produced some pleasing results, with the mean mark being slightly higher than last year. The translation appeared to be less demanding than last year. All of the Creative and Discursive essays appealed to a number of candidates, with a great variety of answers. The Research Based essay displayed some good analytical responses which showed extensive research, but unfortunately some issues still remain with this section, due to an unsuitable choice of topics or pre-learned essays which did not address the questions set.

In terms of language standards have been quite varied, with some very pleasing results at times. Candidates sometimes struggled when there was a lack of topic-specific vocabulary but overall the lexis was sound and reasonably spelt. There were generally some attempts at using more complex structures, like the subjunctive (at times misused) and periodo ipotetico. Accuracy is always variable, with verb conjugation and agreements being the most common mistakes. As for content, questions were sometimes not read or interpreted properly and the word count exceeded, but most candidates were able to write relevant pieces with a reasonable development and organisation of ideas.

In Section C a number of candidates have again not fully adhered to the requirements of the exam and have produced pre-rehearsed essays which did not address the questions set.

There have been also a few candidates who prepared unsuitable topics which did not belong to any of the four main areas of research or which had no reference to Italian culture and society. However there have been also many instances of candidates producing good essays and displaying good knowledge and research on their chosen topic.

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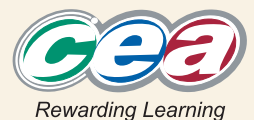
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